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GREAT
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SUMMER
PLACES


CALIFORNIA
MAINE
THE HAMPTONS
MONTANA



JUNE 2003
U.S. \$4.00 CANADA \$5.00
FOREIGN \$5.00



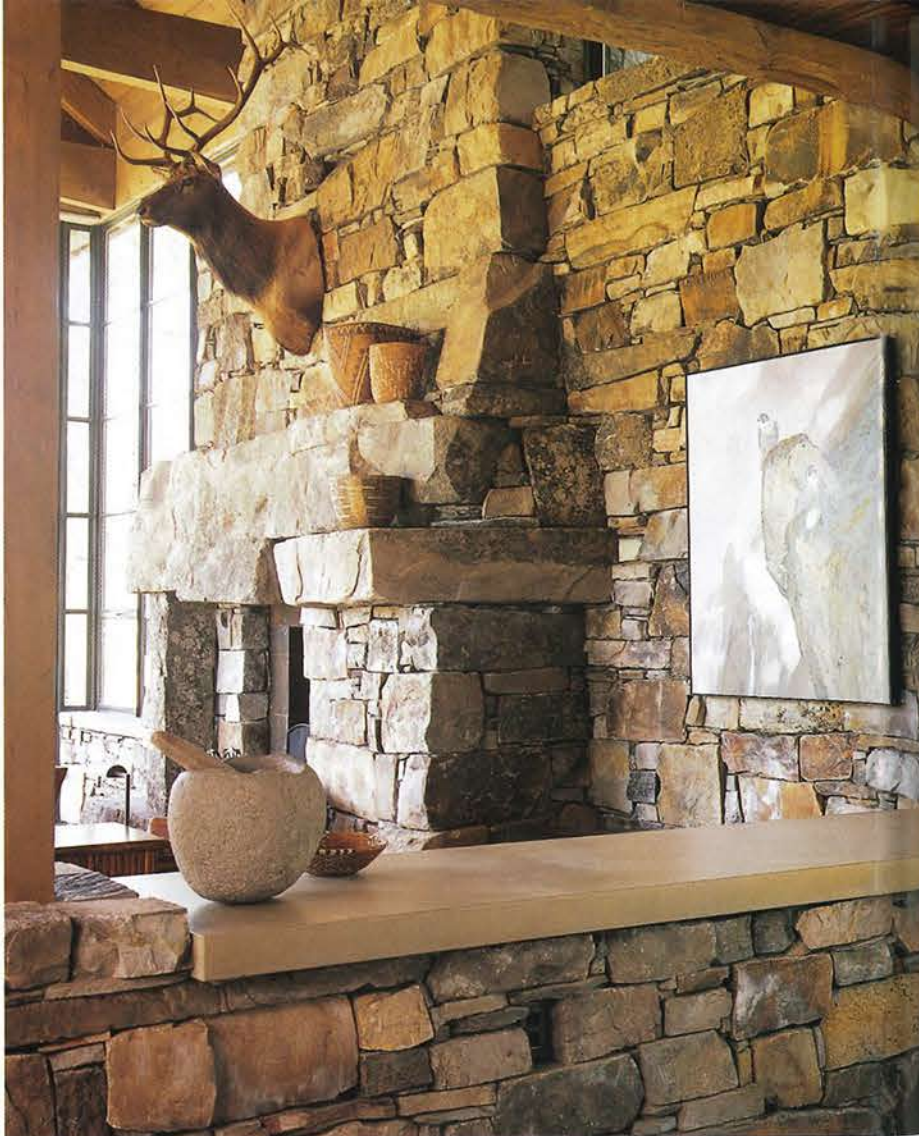
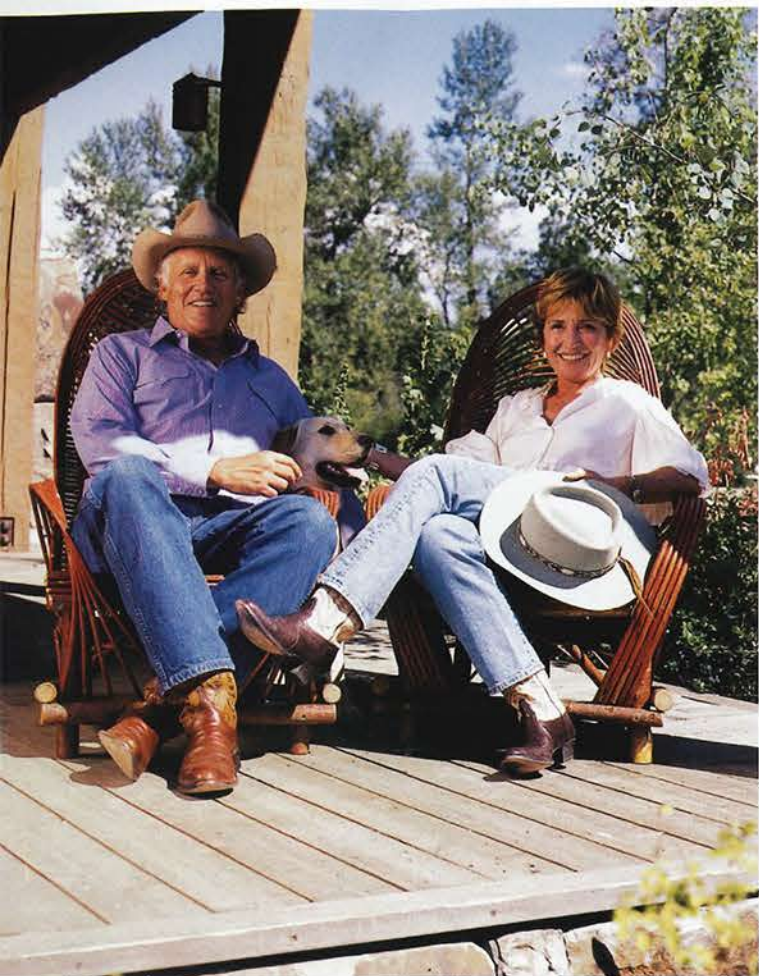
Audrey Blum

A large, modern house at dusk. The house features a prominent glass wall on the left side, illuminated from within, showing a warm interior. To the right of the glass wall is a stone tower with a small, brightly lit window. The house has a dark, gabled roof and is surrounded by tall evergreen trees. The sky is a deep blue with some light clouds. The overall atmosphere is serene and modern.

Window walls in the Colemans' great room offer dramatic vistas from any angle, with a massive stone fireplace indoors and the splendid sweep of the Bitterroot Mountains outside. A breeze-way connects the one-bedroom main house to a two-bedroom guest wing (far right).

Sweet Bitterroot

In western Montana, conservationists Lewis and Suzie Coleman build a refreshingly modern home on the range.



Here's a profound truth: things ain't what they used to be. Across the Mountain West, solitude is rapidly giving way to crowds, scenery to traffic jams. And life in Montana's Bitterroot valley, in the western part of the state, is no exception. With blue-ribbon trout fishing and abundant white-tailed deer, Lewis-and-Clark trail markers and towns that haven't gotten around to adding stoplights, the valley is struggling hard to hold on to the good old days. But about thirty miles south of Missoula, through a gate of stacked native stone, past a set of spring creeks packed tight with mallards, there's a small corner of the Bitterroot that still manages to recall—not Montana the way it used to be, exactly—but maybe Montana the way it *should* have been.

Lewis and Suzie Coleman are San Franciscans, but Lewis's Montana roots go as deep as those of the most entrenched locals: his great-grandfather was a justice on the state's first supreme court, and Lew himself remembers fishing the Madison River back in the '50s. While it was probably Lew who first started thinking about a Montana home, it took Suzie to light the spark. "We'd been going to the Bitterroot for years, visiting friends, fishing the river," she says. "Finally there came a point when I said to Lew, 'Couldn't we just

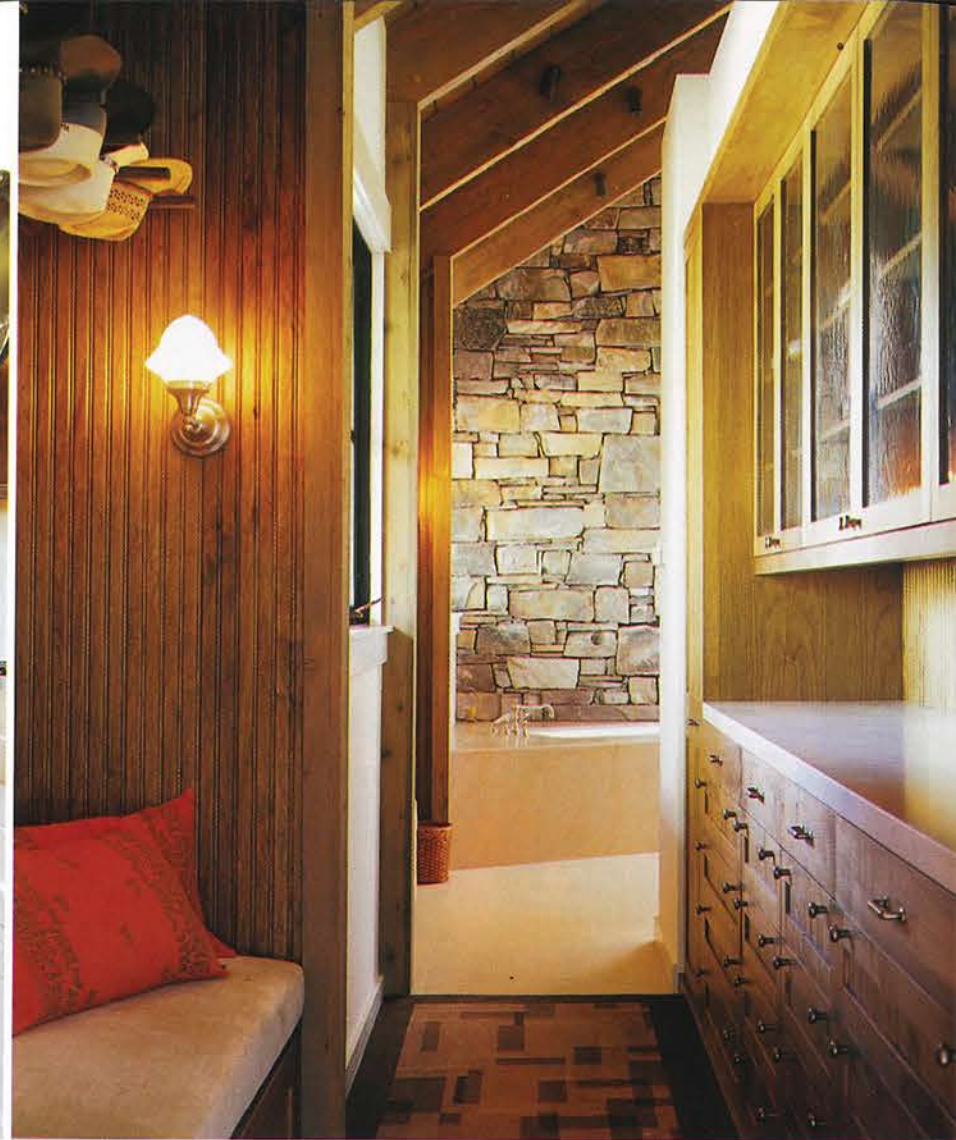
find five acres near the river somewhere?' And that was it. We were off and running."

Off and running indeed. By the time all was said and done, in 2001, the five acres had grown to twelve hundred, and the Colemans' new property—a worn-out cattle ranch with overgrazed stream banks and miles of crisscrossed barbed-wire fences—had become a kind of river-bottom Eden, a model of habitat restoration and caretaking. While Lew's background is in banking (over the years he has served as Bank of America's chief financial officer, vice chairman of the board, and the chairman of Banc of America Securities), his most recent passions have revolved around conservation. He's a board member of Conservation International and also the president of the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, a philanthropic trust devoted to education and environmental

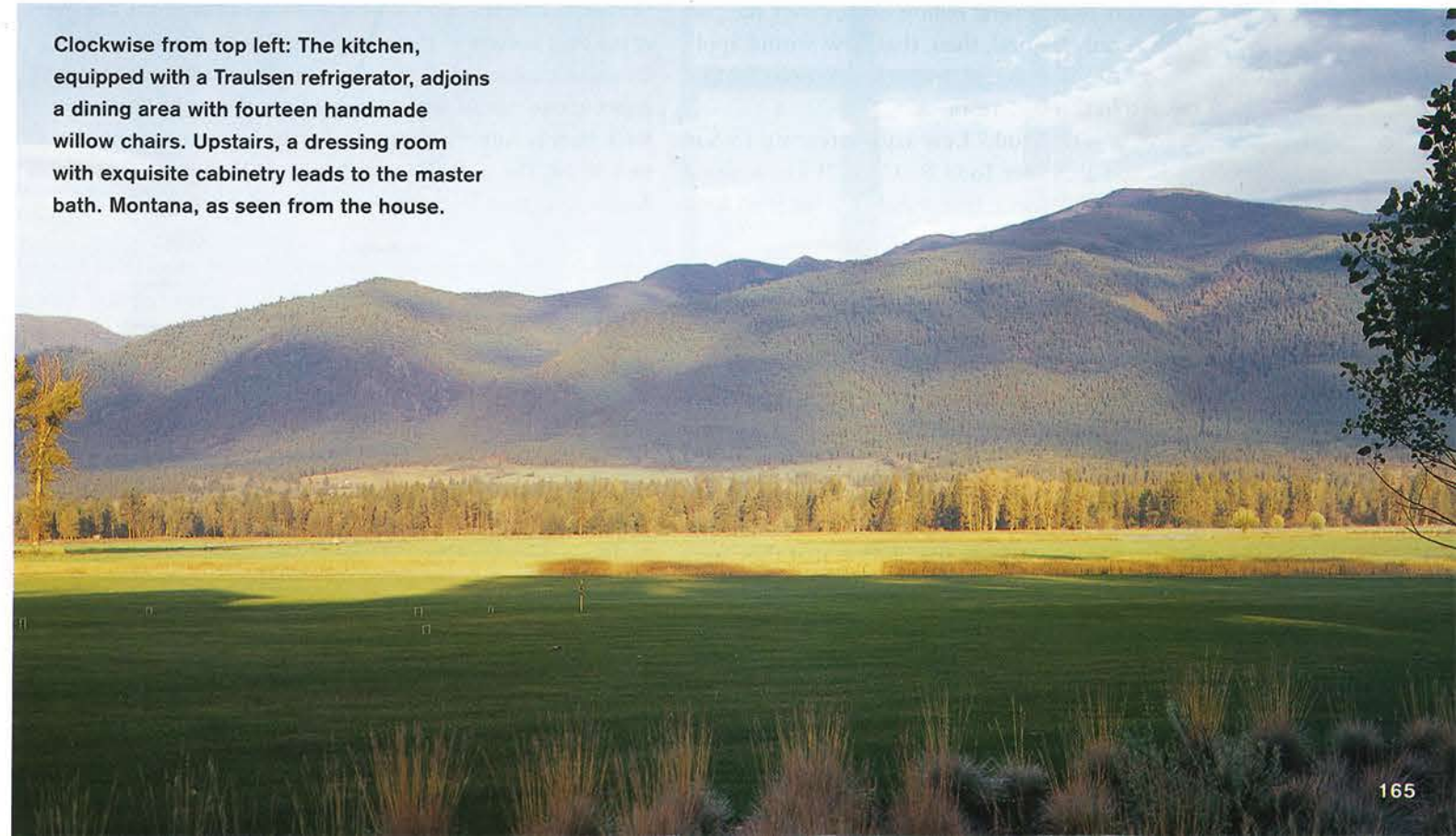
The Chief Cliff rock (above right) that Lew and Suzie Coleman (above left) chose for their residence is locally quarried. Opposite, another view of the great room highlights L.A. interior designer Luis Ortega's eclectic choices and bold custom work, including the carpet based on a Navajo-blanket pattern. For shopping information, see page 202.



Used on parts of the exterior, cedar siding also makes itself at home on the walls and ceiling of the master bedroom. The suite's walnut poster bed and cabbage-rose-inspired carpet were both designed by Luis Ortega.



Clockwise from top left: The kitchen, equipped with a Traulsen refrigerator, adjoins a dining area with fourteen handmade willow chairs. Upstairs, a dressing room with exquisite cabinetry leads to the master bath. Montana, as seen from the house.





issues (they've given away several billion dollars over the past four years). It was only natural, then, that Lew would apply his caretaking sensibilities to the part-time retreat he and Suzie have created in the Bitterroot.

"Our first call was to Todd," Lew says, referring to San Francisco landscape architect Todd R. Cole. "I knew that I wanted the landscape to come first. I didn't want it to look like it had been pasted around the buildings."

The couple had worked with Cole twice before, in the Bay Area and in Hawaii, experiences that had left both sides with a feeling of friendship and respect. "The Colemans are just wonderful to work with," says Cole. "They understand design. They understand subtlety in the choice of materials. And they understand the process of moving from design to reality."

Cole laid out the main driveway—two curving miles of ponderosa pines, lush hay fields and restored stream banks—with an eye toward giving visitors the illusion that they were gradually moving farther and farther away from civilization. "We didn't see it as planning a garden," Cole says, "so much as the restoration of a landscape." He also wanted the driveway to provide clues to the approaching house, which was

"A cleaner interpretation of what a ranch can be at the beginning of the 21st century"—that's how Luis Ortega describes the Coleman compound. In the living area of the three-bedroom guest house (above left), he paired a new sofa by England's Mark Harvey with a painted-back antique chair bought at auction. Right: The guest house's "cowboy" bedroom. Opposite: A serene setting in stone—the foyer of the guest house.

then only in the planning stages. The front gate of rusted steel, the series of native-stone bridges spanning the spring creeks and the careful treatment of the land itself were all intended to anticipate the high level of craftsmanship used in the residential buildings. Finally, Cole wanted the drive to give visitors a chance to appreciate the architecture. "As you make your way across the pasture, you arrive at an open stand of cottonwoods. We saw this as a kind of pause point, a place for you to stop and consider what's coming," he says.

The two-story house is actually part of a compound, a circular arrangement of four stone-timber-and-glass structures situated against riverine cottonwoods and facing 400 acres of river-bottom fields and the Bitterroot Mountains. Larry Yaw and Rich Carr, partners in the Colorado firm Cottle ▶198

